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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/2016  
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SUBJECT: FRANCE CONCERNED AT FATE OF KEY SC PRESIDENCY  
DELIVERABLE ON CHILD SOLDIERS

REF: STATE 122441

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah B. Rosenblatt.  
Reasons 1.4b,d

¶1. (C) Poloff relayed reftel demarche points on July 27 to MFA IO DAS-Equivalent Jean-Hugues Simon Michel, who expressed dissatisfaction that USG objections to the draft resolution would block a key deliverable for the French Security Council Presidency in July. He stressed that the initiative enjoyed the direct support of FM Douste-Blazy. Unmoved by arguments that the USG required more time for interagency review of the proposed sanctions for the recruitment of Child-Soldiers in the DRC, Simon Michel countered that the resolution had been circulating for three weeks. Poloff explained, per reftel, that the USG would not be able to join consensus on the draft resolution. Simon Michel said he would confer with A/S-Equivalent Sylvie Bermann on how to proceed. Simon Michel said that Nathalie Delapalme, Cabinet Adviser to FM Douste-Blazy for African and Humanitarian Affairs, had the MFA lead on the matter.

¶2. (C) In a follow-up discussion, Delapalme emphasized for poloff the degree of personal engagement on the part of FM Douste-Blazy with the issue of Child-Soldiers and the draft in question. She noted that FM Douste-Blazy had intended to chair a July SC meeting to address Child-Soldiers until he was called away by the emergency on Lebanon. Delapalme commented that she did not understand how the USG could have substantive objections to the draft resolution, which was less ambitious in scope, she said, than the 2000 UNGA Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that the U.S. Senate had already ratified. The French draft moreover explicitly aims to target non-state actors, hence it could not be construed as calling into question the military practices of member states. Delapalme commented further that adoption of the draft would constitute an important message for the DRC at a critical period.

¶3. (C) Poloff explained that the USG sincerely wanted to engage with France in its campaign to combat abused related to Child-Soldiers. The USG required additional time for interagency review of the draft, given its groundbreaking introduction of targeted sanctions tied to the issue of Child-Soldiers. Delapalme expressed bafflement, similar to Simon Michel, given that the French text had been on the table for over three weeks. Delapalme said France would like to find acceptable language for the USG in order to maintain the sanctions initiative and preserve what FM Douste-Blazy and Ambassador de La Sabliere viewed as a key deliverable to the French SC Presidency in July.

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